

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

There are no formal matters outstanding.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation that the Official Action indicated that claim 3 was directed to allowable subject matter.

Accordingly, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the recitations of allowable claim 3, claims 3-4 being cancelled.

In view of this, allowance of claims 1-2 is solicited.

New claim 19 corresponds to previous claim 2, the recitations being somewhat changed. Accordingly, allowance of claim 19 is also solicited.

Claims 1, 2 and 4 were rejected as obvious over SUZUKI 5,643,612.

Applicant has added new claims which are believed to recite the invention in a non-obvious manner for the reasons discussed below.

The present invention provides a process: a) to place and b) to hold the peripheral portion of a supple covering against a peripheral rim of a support. SUZUKI provides only a), whereas the invention provides both a) and above all b).

According to SUZUKI, the edge portion (22) of the "show" face of a supple covering (surfacing material 14) is

shaped on a die (28) by contact with retractable supporting members (48), and the edge portion (22) is inserted in the support (main body 12) with progressive retraction of supporting members (48) in the die. Supporting members contact the "show" face of the covering.

A first remark is that the supporting members act only locally on the edge portion (see supporting members 48 of Figures 8 and 64 of Figure 9). This solution is not convenient for very supple material as natural fibers (wool, cotton).

A second remark is that the edge portion (22) of the supple covering is not held in the support during foam injection, and if the covering material is very supple, the covering cannot prevent the foam from escaping between itself and the support element.

According to the invention, before inserting the supple covering, its peripheral portion at least is rigidified by forming a complex constituted by the covering and a rigid holding element, and by using the complex instead of the sole supple covering. Holding member contact the face opposed to the "show" face of the covering.

So, the problem of shaping the edge portion to insert it in the support and the problem of preventing distortion of edge portion during foaming are both solved. Moreover, a complex die apparatus with mobile supporting members is not required, and the molding apparatus may be simple.

To emphasize the features of the invention, in new claims 5-8, the process of claim 5 includes a step of "forming a complex by connecting the face of the covering opposed to said show face to a relatively rigid holding element", and the complex is used instead of the covering in the placing and introducing steps.

The forming step giving a sufficient rigidity to the edge portion is neither disclosed nor suggested by SUZUKI.

In reference to claim 6, SUZUKI refers to a local action, but the word "locally" means a portion only of the periphery (see Figures 8 and 9). In claim 2, "locally" means "at the periphery and not in the central portion". So, claim 6 has been added by removing the word "locally" from claim 2.

For similar reasons, new independent claim 9 and its dependent claims are also believed allowable. Note that the new dependent claims correspond to recitations found in the original claims and those discussed above.

In view of the above, applicant believes that the newly-added claims are allowable. Accordingly, allowance of claims 5-18 is also solicited.

Applicant believes that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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